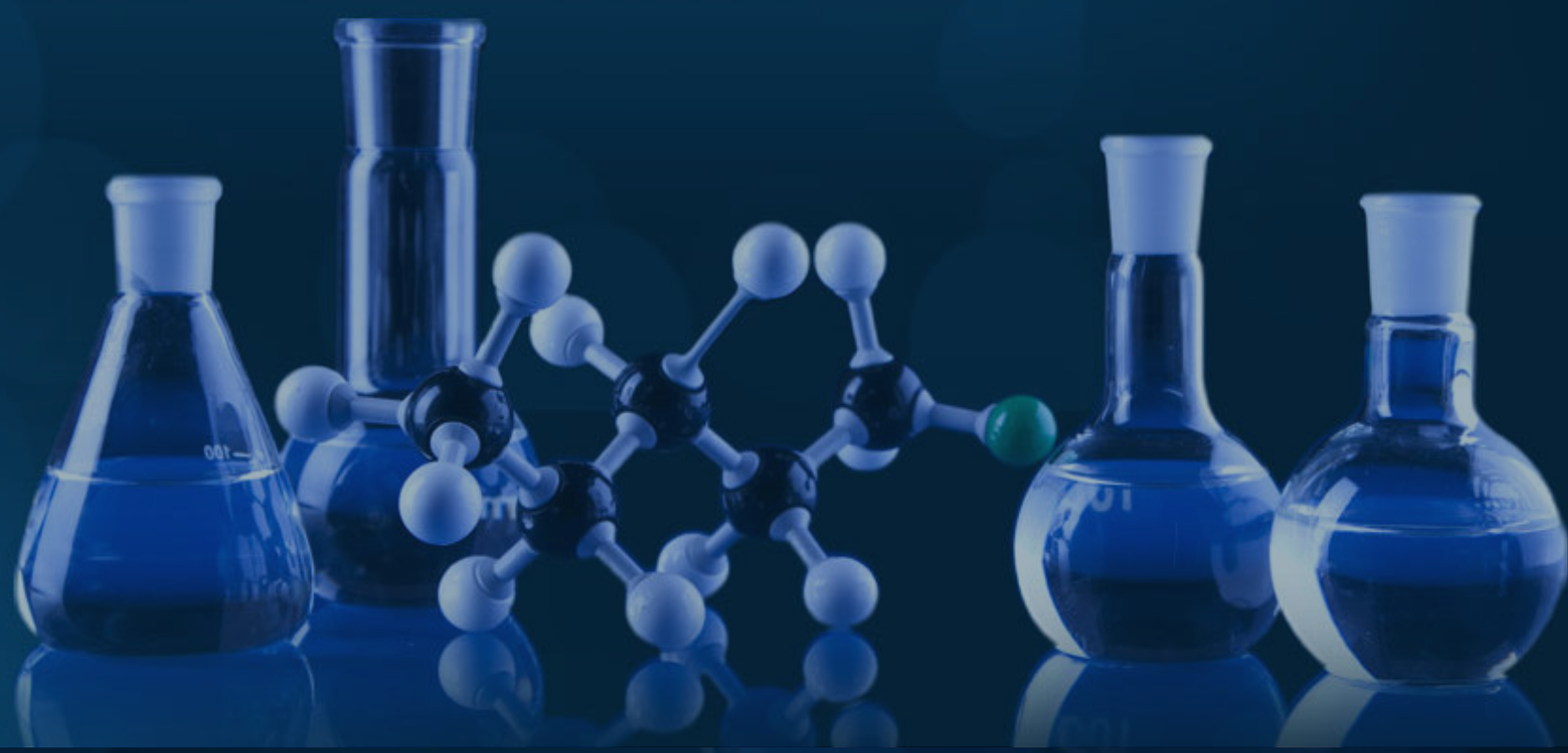




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Underweight

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Underweight

While many people suffer from excessive weight, a significant number have difficulty gaining or maintaining their weight. Nutrition can play an important role in helping to achieve weight gain.

Poor Absorption

Some underweight individuals do not absorb their food well. This may be due to low levels of digestive enzymes caused by a deficiency of zinc or a low sodium/potassium ratio. Another cause is adrenal insufficiency. This causes low tissue levels of sodium and potassium. These elements are needed for the production of hydrochloric acid in the stomach.

Food allergies can contribute to an underweight condition. In non-tropical sprue, a gluten intolerance causes atrophy of the villi of the intestines which are required for the absorption of food. Anyone with this condition must strictly avoid wheat and oat products that contain gluten.

Sometimes poor absorption is due to what may be called '*sympathetic dominance*'. This can be described as a deficiency of vital energy in the digestive tract. Sympathetic nervous system activity shunts blood toward the muscles and brain and away from the digestive system. Such individuals are often described as high-strung or tense. They are spending energy, but not replenishing and nourishing themselves adequately. Their intestines are often said to be *tied up in knots*.

A hair analysis of this group oftentimes reveal slow oxidation. They are, in fact exhausted fast oxidizers. They still shunt energy away from the digestive tract, impairing digestion. They require nutritional supplements and digestive aids. However, they may need other natural therapies as well to reduce their nervous condition. In addition to nutrition, they benefit from plenty of rest and sleep and relaxed, peaceful, regular meals. Relaxation, massage, meditation and deep breathing techniques are also helpful.

Poor Appetite And Anorexia

Another group of underweight people simply do not eat enough. Many are not hungry and skip meals. Oftentimes these people are copper toxic and zinc deficient. Zinc is needed for the appestat, or appetite center of the brain. Zinc deficiency is an important cause of anorexia, or lack of appetite. Copper toxicity is also associated with candida albicans infection that can cause bloating, irritation and other disagreeable symptoms at mealtime.

Those who simply find eating an inconvenience need to change their lifestyle to assure regular, sit-down meals. Snacking between meals may also be helpful for those who will not take the time to have regular meals.

Some people avoid eating for fear of gaining weight, often due to a distorted body image. This condition is called anorexia nervosa. Unfortunately, avoiding eating worsens one's zinc deficiency and copper toxicity. Lowered zinc and high copper, in turn, further diminish the appetite. A vicious cycle ensues that can be lethal.

Some people do not eat much because their digestive capacity is low. This may be due to zinc deficiency, adrenal insufficiency, or sluggish liver or pancreatic function. Children who are '*fussy eaters*' often improve dramatically when supplemented with zinc and other trace elements they require to stimulate the appetite and enhance production of digestive enzymes.

Food sensitivities, or the fear of food sensitivities, can also cause one not to eat enough. Eating is not a pleasant experience for these people. A scientific nutrition program will often reduce food sensitivities in time. Meanwhile, these individuals must avoid sensitive foods and allow themselves to eat what they can eat comfortably.

Oxidation Types And Weight Loss

One might think that most underweight individuals would be fast oxidizers who literally burn up their food at an excessive rate. This occurs, but is not that common. Many underweight individuals are slow oxidizers.

Fast oxidizers who are underweight often have a low sodium/potassium ratio. This low ratio is associated with digestive problems and feelings of frustration that may contribute to eating disorders. Fast oxidizers can also lose weight due to nervousness and anxiety that impairs digestion. However, many fast oxidizers have a tendency to gain weight. Excessive adrenal activity can result in *Cushing's Syndrome*, in which fat is deposited in the stomach and the shoulders. Fast oxidizers also tend to retain more water in their tissues due to elevated sodium levels.

Slow oxidizers, by contrast, have low sodium levels and thus may retain less fluid in the tissues. Elevated tissue calcium in slow oxidizers stabilizes cell membranes and interferes with nutrient transport into the cells. Low sodium and potassium levels in slow oxidizers may also impair the transport of nutrients into the body cells. This can cause a 'cellular starvation'. Slow oxidizers also have a greater tendency for sluggish liver activity and copper toxicity that reduce appetite and digestive capacity.

Copper And Other Toxic Metals

Copper is associated with metabolic problems because it disturbs normal glandular activity. A copper imbalance can mimic an overactive thyroid condition. Such people eat often but do not gain weight. Frequently, one who is diagnosed with an overactive thyroid, may in fact, be suffering from a copper toxicity problem. Copper is stored in the liver where it may affect the production of bile and other substances involved in digestion. Copper or iron imbalance can also cause anemia, which can impair appetite and weight gain in some individuals.

Cadmium toxicity interferes with zinc metabolism and contributes to zinc deficiency syndromes such as anorexia. Mercury toxicity can also cause nervous symptoms and often accompanies copper toxicity.

Conquering an underweight condition requires patience and a total approach to health. This includes balancing body chemistry, avoiding sensitive foods, restoring the nervous system and adopting a relaxed, healthful life style.

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